



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Treatment of the Warshafana

In December 2014 the *Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs* points out that:

“During the uprising tribes attained both arms and experience and therefore gained local influence and territorial control. Minority groups like Amazigh, Tuareg and Tubu have gained significant freedom through de-facto self-rule.¹²⁷ In the northwest, Libyans have identified with one of two rival alliances; a ‘lower’ tribal alliance along the coast, including Misrata, Zawiya, and some of the Farjan tribes, and an ‘upper’ which consists largely of Bedouin alliances in the mountains and also further south including Zintan, Warfallah, Qadhadhfa, Maqarha and Warshafana tribes” (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (19 December 2014) *Libya: Militias, Tribes and Islamists*, p.25).

A report released in January 2015 by the *United Nations Human Rights Council* states:

“Indiscriminate attacks by all sides in densely populated areas have been frequently reported, resulting in civilian casualties in Tripoli, Benghazi, Warshafana, the Nafusa Mountains and other areas” (United Nations Human Rights Council (12 January 2015) *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Libya and on related technical support and capacity-building needs*, p.5).

This document also points out that:

“UNSMIL/OHCHR received reports of displacement as a result of damage to residential properties through indiscriminate shelling, and of intentional destruction of residential properties, farms, factories and other businesses by armed groups targeting perceived opponents, particularly in Warshafana and in Benghazi” (ibid, p.8).

In February 2015 the *United Nations Support Mission in Libya* notes:

“In western Libya, UNSMIL estimates that armed hostilities in the Warshafana tribal belt area left approximately 100 dead, 500 injured and 120,000 displaced” (United Nations Support Mission in Libya (25 February 2015) *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya*, p.5).

This document also states that:

“During the Libya Dawn offensive into the Warshafana tribal belt area during September 2014, the warring sides were reported to have engaged in abductions, detentions and the torture of civilians, as well as indiscriminate shelling that damaged schools, hospitals and other facilities. Operation Libya Dawn also extensively targeted homes, farms and shops” (ibid, p.8).

In February 2015 an *Amnesty International* document on events of 2014 states that:

“Militias and other armed forces committed possible war crimes, other serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses. They killed or injured hundreds of civilians and destroyed and damaged civilian infrastructure and objects in indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas in Benghazi, Tripoli, Warshafana, Zawiya, the Nafusa Mountains and elsewhere. Libya Dawn forces, Zintan Brigades and Warshafana militias abducted civilians based on their origin or political affiliation, tortured and otherwise ill-treated detainees, and in some cases summarily killed captured fighters” (Amnesty International (25 February 2015) *Amnesty International Report 2014/15, Libya*).

In April 2015 the *United Nations Support Mission in Libya* states:

“...the hardship endured by the inhabitants of Warshafana, many of whom have been displaced, abducted and tortured, and they are in dire need of humanitarian aid” (United Nations Support Mission in Libya (11 April 2015) *UNSMIL Condemns Escalation in Warshafana, Calls for Safeguarding Neutrality of National Institutions*).

A document published in May 2015 by the *United Nations Support Mission in Libya* notes that

“Civilians from Warshafana, many displaced since the fighting in July 2014, are also vulnerable to abductions by armed groups affiliated to Libya Dawn mainly from Janzour and al-Zawiya as well as an armed group under the command of Salah Wadi allied to Libya Dawn” (United Nations Support Mission in Libya (15 May 2015) *Briefing note – 15 May 2015: Civilians Facing Abduction and Torture in Libya*).

A report issued in June 2015 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of the preceding year notes that:

“Following the expulsion of Zintani forces from Tripoli in August, Operation Dawn forces attacked civilian areas under the control of the Warshafana tribe, which aligned with the Zintan, causing additional damage and civilian casualties...In October, Operation Dawn attacks in the Warshafana region reportedly resulted in hundreds of deaths, while retaliatory attacks by Zintani militias in Kikla and the surrounding Jebel Nafusa area approximately 60 miles southwest of Tripoli resulted in more than 60 deaths and 170 injured, according to media reports” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, Libya*, pp.4-5).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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